

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 DOHA 00033 120537Z

11

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00

DLOS-04 SAL-01 DOTE-00 FMC-02 OFA-01 /033 W

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R 120500Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1167

INFO USDOC WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

COMIDEASTFOR

UNCLAS DOHA 0033

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, EWWT, QA

SUBJ: DOHA PORT SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: WAITING TIME AT PORT OF DOHA PRESENTLY AVERAGING 65-70 DAYS WITH LITTLE HOPE OF IMPROVEMENT IN NEAR FUTURE. CONGESTION SURCHARGES RANGE FROM 50 PERCENT JBO 70 PERCENT AND ARE EXPECTED TO CLIMB EVEN HIGHER. REGISTRATION SYSTEM IS IN EFFECT BUT HAS DONE LITTLE TO EASE CONGESTION. PORT PROCEDURES, INCLUDING OPERATIONS DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS ONLY, CONTINUE UNCHANGED DESPITE WORSENING SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JAN 11, 43 SHIPS WERE WAITING TO OFFLOAD AT DOHA'S FOUR BERTH PORT. AVERAGE LENGTH OF DELAY IS 65-70 DAYS. ACCORDING

OFFICIALS AT PORT AND NATIONAL SHIPPING AGENCY, THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT FOR IMPROVEMENT. TWO NEW BERTHS ARE BEING CONSTRUCTED AT UMM SAID, SOUTH OF DOHA, AND ARE SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION IN LATE 1976. ASIDE FROM SEASONAL FLUCTUATIONS IN CARGO VOLUME,
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PAGE 02 DOHA 00033 120537Z

NO LONG TERM ALLEVIATION OF CONGESTION IS SEEN UNTIL NEW BERTHS ARE READY. A SIX BERTH EXTENSION OF DOHA PORT HAS BEEN DELAYED

PENDING SUBMISSION OF COUNTRY WIDE PORT STUDY BEING PREPARED BY CONSULTANTS.

3. CONGESTION SURCHARGES RANGE FROM LOW OF 50 PERCENT (AFRICA) TO HIGH OF 70 PERCENT (ASSOCIATED CONFERENCE OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROVS AND 8900 LINES). GOQ HAS RECEIVED TELEX FROM 8900 LINES STATING THAT EFFECTIVE FEB 8, SURCHARGE WILL BE INCREASED TO 90 PERCENT. SOME VESSELS HAVE BEEN DISCHARGING INTO BARGES TO AVOID LENGTHY DELAYS, BUT THIS NOT GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE GIVEN HIGH COST AND LOW AVAILABILITY OF BARGES. GOQ IS GIVING BERTHING PRIORITY TO PASSENGER SHIPS AND VESSELS CARRYING LIVESTOCK OR ANY OTHER CARGOES DESIGNATED AS ESSENTIAL BY GOVERNMENT. THIS INCLUDES ALL SHIPS CARRYING CEMENT OR BULK FOODSTUFFS FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNT, AND ACCORDING SHIPPING OFFICIAL, AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT AT LEAST ONE OF DOHA'S FOUR BERTHS IS OCCUPIED BY SHIP GIVEN "PRIORITY". REGISTRATION SYSTEM IS IN EFFECT ALLOWING VESSELS TO REGISTER FOR BERTH AT DOHA AND THEN MOVE ON TO OTHER GULF PORTS, BUT THIS HAS MADE LITTLE APPRECIABLE DIFFERENCE IN WAITING TIME DUE TO CONGESTION ELSEWHERE.

4. PORT OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES ARXUBASICALLY SAME AS IN NON-CONGESTED DAYS OF YORE. LONGSHOREMEN ARE ON DUTY FOR SINGLE 12 HOUR SHIFT ONLY; NEITHER CARGO HANDLING NOR SHIP MOVEMENTS TAKE PLACE AT NIGHT. RECOMMENDATION THAT PORT COMMENCE 24 HOUR OPERATION HAS BEEN STALLED. OFFICIALS SAY EXTREME LABOR SHORTAGE WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO RECRUIT SECOND SHIFT AND ALSO POINT OUT THAT UNTRAINED LABORERS WORKING UNDER POOR NIGHT LIGHTING WOULD CREATE UNACCEPTABLE ACCIDENT LEVEL.

5. PORT SITUATION HAS BEGUN TO AFFECT PRICE AND AVAILABILITY OF NUMBER OF ITEMS. INCREASING SURCHARGES HAVE JACKED THE PRICES OF VIRTUALLY ALL IMPORTS. SHORTAGES HAVE ALSO DEVELOPED, MOST RECENTLY OF CEMENT AND FLOUR. MANY IMPORTERS ARE TURNING TO OVERLAND TRANSPORT FROM EUROPE AS MEANS OF AVOIDING DELAYS AND EXTRA CHARGES. WE UNDERSTAND FROM LOCAL BUSINESSMEN THAT DUE TO HIGH 8900 LINES SURCHARGE AND ABSENCE OF ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SHIPPING, U.S. PRODUCTS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY NON-COMPETITIVE. ADDITIONAL 20 PERCENT INCREASE IN SURCHARGE
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PAGE 03 DOHA 00033 120537Z

PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY WILL EXACERBATE THIS SITUATION.
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